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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 96

By Sands

A RESOLUTION to create a special joint committee to study wage disparity in the workplace, and to study the disparity between wages for state employees as compared to comparable employees in the private sector.

WHEREAS, women of today work for pay in greater numbers, in more occupations and for more years of their lives than ever before; and

WHEREAS, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, provided a critical foundation for women seeking greater opportunities in the workplace and a paycheck free from stereotypes about the value of women's work; and

WHEREAS, legislative efforts are currently under way at the Federal level which call for enhanced enforcement of equal pay laws, as well as additional policy initiatives and improved training for government agencies charged with enforcing equal pay requirements under the law; and

WHEREAS, the issue of equal pay continues to resonate among women in the 1990s, as illustrated by a 1994 survey conducted by the Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, which found that improving pay and benefits was one of working women's three main priorities for change, along with balancing work and family and gaining respect and opportunity on the job; and

WHEREAS, according to the Department of Labor and Industry, Bureau of Research and Statistics, the trend is that more women are entering the labor force; and

WHEREAS, women's share of the labor force will continue to increase, exceeding 47% as a larger proportion of women look for jobs; and

WHEREAS, the effects of wage disparity can follow women throughout their lives, since pension and Social Security benefits are based on pay earned while working; and

WHEREAS, the existence of pay disparities:

(1) can depress the wages of working families who rely on the wages of all members of the family to make ends meet; and

(2) can prevent the maximum utilization of the available labor resources; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for a comprehensive reexamination of the role that Federal and State laws play in the daily deterrence of workplace wage discrimination; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That there is hereby created a special joint committee to review and include a study of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to determine its effectiveness in deterring wage disparity in the workplace, a review of current Federal and State laws to determine if additional policy initiatives or outreach programs or legislation is needed to ensure equal pay in this state, a review of current training and funding mechanisms to determine if government agencies have the tools and resources they need to identify and pursue equal pay violations, a study of Federal policy initiatives addressing wage disparity as they may apply to Tennessee, and a study of the disparity between wages for state employees as compared to comparable employees in the private sector.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the committee shall consist of three (3) members of the House of Representatives and three (3) members of the Senate, to be appointed by the respective speakers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That all appropriate state agencies shall provide assistance to the special joint committee upon request of the chair.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That all legislative members of the special joint committee who are duly elected members of the General Assembly shall remain members of such committee until the committee reports its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the special joint committee shall be convened by the member with the most years of continuous service in the General Assembly; and at its first meeting shall elect a chair, vice-chair, and such other officers the committee deems necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the special joint committee shall timely report its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation or interim reports, to the One Hundred Third General Assembly no later than February 1, 2003, at which time the committee shall cease to exist.